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11 January 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Howard J. Osborn  
Director of Security

SUBJECT : Leak Identification

1. The following is an unsolicited suggestion on a matter of great personal interest but outside my official area of responsibility. Nonetheless, with the rest of us, I find myself choked with rage over the continuing leaks of Agency documents which are then put, sometimes in their entirety, into the public domain. The current activities of Jack Anderson are but the most recent example of this process, albeit a particularly galling one.

2. As you know far better than I, tracking down such leaks is an almost impossible chore. I have a suggestion which might help the tracking effort in future cases of unauthorized disclosure. It involves two sets of actions:

- (a) Each authorized Agency copy of any document should bear a serial number placed inconspicuously thereon but in a type format readily identifiable, if one knows where to look and what to look for.

This would work as follows: If ten copies of a given day's issue of the PDB are produced, each copy would carry its own identifying number as would each of its pages. Similarly, each of the, say, 200 copies of a Confidential TDCS would carry its identifying number (i.e., from 1 through 200) on each of its pages. All Agency documents sent out of this building would be labeled in this fashion.

- (b) Our logging procedure for each document should keep track of which blocks of numbers went where. For example, the logs would record (as they probably already) who received each copy of the PDB. They would also record (as I believe is not now the case, where copies of documents at the other end of the sensitivity spectrum went. In the case of the 200 copy Confidential TDCS, for example, the log would

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show that copies 1-10 were internally distributed, 20-30 went to State, 31-35 to the White House, 35-50 to DIA, etc.

3. The above procedure would be a trifle cumbersome to institute. But all factors considered, it should not be excessively burdensome, particularly since the identifying numbers could be automatically imprinted when our publications were being run off. I recognize that collation will be made much more difficult if assembly of lengthy documents has to be done with an eye to correct matching of serial numbers for all pages of each complete document. The collation problem might dictate putting a serial number on only the front page of non-sensitive documents of any appreciable length, but even this would be an improvement over the present system.

4. If implemented, my suggestion could produce the kind of result illustrated by the following hypothetical example: If a future Jack Anderson showed on TV the exact text from which he was quoting or if a newspaper (say the New York Times) printed a facsimile to authenticate its story, then the serial number of that document, when checked against our expanded logs, would tell us immediately the office to which it was initially sent when it left the Agency. We would thus know whether the copy actually leaked was one that originally went to State, the White House, DIA, etc. This would not solve the leak question, but at least it would enable us to focus our preliminary investigations much more sharply than is now possible.

5. You have probably already thought of some variant of the above and may well have discarded it for very valid reasons. I, nonetheless, offer it for your consideration.

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